



BIG APPLE GREETER NEWS

SPRING 2006

Dear Friends,



New Year...new beginnings. I would like to welcome new Board members Deborah MacFarlane, VP Institutional Development, Thirteen/WNET, and Carl Gambino, Sr. V.P./Regional Administrator, North Fork Bank, and look forward to

working with them on many successful ventures.

As I step down after 4 years as Board Chair, I would like to thank the dedicated people of Big Apple Greeter who have made my tenure on the Board so rewarding: volunteers, staff, and fellow Board members. I would also like to congratulate Paul Insalaco, President, BF9 Media, as Big Apple Greeter's new Board Chair. Paul has been on Board since 1994 and a part of the Big Apple Greeter extended family since we started in 1992; Paul's father was a member of our very first Board of Directors.

Big Apple Greeter is a special organization, bringing New Yorkers and visitors together to share the enjoyment of this wonderful city. 2006 looks bright with promise, and I wish you all a Happy New Year.

Christopher Boylan
Chair, Board of Directors



Happy New Year to all our friends! I am happy to say 2005 was another banner year for us.

Big Apple Greeter measures success by the amount of positive publicity we bring to New York City, and this year we worked with 84 journalists from USA, France, UK, Germany, Canada, Sweden, Argentina, China, and Ireland, reporting the Big Apple Greeter story in print, radio, TV and on the Internet. Our economic impact on New York City is estimated at \$6.4 million and indirect impact at \$83 million.

We also welcomed 48 new Greeters to our extended family, bringing the total number of Greeters to 328. Greeters met nearly 7,000 visitors in 2005, and each visitor went home with a unique story about New York City and a special Greeter who became a new friend.

We are especially proud of our new website. Please visit www.bigapplegreeter.org and let us know what you think of our new look!

Lynn Brooks
Executive Director

Bigapplegreeter.org Gets a Facelift

Visitors to Big Apple Greeter's website at www.bigapplegreeter.org are in for a big surprise. A completely revamped website is what now greets them, enticing visitors with more extensive information, improved navigation and a contemporary look. The new website is now accessible for people with a visual impairment, using a larger, 14pt non-serif font throughout the site. This is the first redesign of the website since Big Apple Greeter went online in 1997.

The new website features a fresh new image with colorful pages and photos that capture the essence of Big Apple Greeter and New York City. The home page has a welcoming look and feel, featuring changing images of our city along with an easy to navigate menu, quick links to the most visited pages, and a visitor testimonial.

Look past the home page, and visitors will find easy to use special sections. "How do I spend time with a New Yorker?" will provide visitors with valuable information about the Greeter experience. "What is the Access Program?" will introduce visitors to Big Apple Greeter's program for travelers with disabilities. It offers a recently updated Access Resource Guide, developed as an aid for travelers with disabilities as they find their way around New York City. It now lists over 60 resources including attractions, transportation, access agencies and equipment rental companies.

Potential volunteers and people looking to get involved with Big Apple Greeter will find what they need, including volunteer applications and job descriptions, in "How do I become a volunteer?" Testimonials from active Greeters give an impression of what being a volunteer entails and help convey the enthusiasm and motivation for becoming a part of Big Apple Greeter. "How can I support Big Apple Greeter?" is aimed at those wanting to make a donation, find out about Big Apple Greeter's Board of Directors, or read the Annual Report.



In the new "Resource" area, website visitors will find valuable links to tourism partners, including NYC & Company, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, I Love NY, and The Global Greeter Network, an association of sister Greeter programs around the world. Journalists will find Big Apple Greeter's press kit on the Press Room page. Big Apple Greeter's Neighborhood Information Profiles, an ongoing series of lively reports on some of New York City's most intriguing neighborhoods, are now showcased on its own page that includes a five-borough photo gallery that will be updated on a regular basis.

But the changes won't stop there. Big Apple Greeter is constantly looking for ways to improve the site to better serve visitors, volunteers and partners. The site will soon be available in French, German and Spanish, with other languages to follow. In the future visitor and Greeter post-visit questionnaires that are now submitted on paper will become online forms. A special Greeter section is planned which will allow Greeters to share experiences and suggestions, as is a visitor blog.

Our Visitors say... He brought to life the otherwise dry Financial District and gave us a good understanding of New Yorker's attitude to life...Meeting with our Greeter was the very best thing we did while in NYC...Her friendliness made us feel like family... He went out of his way to include our 14 year old son by pointing out things he was interested in... After taking the subway with her, we comfortably used it the following days...

CELEBRATE NEW YORK 2005

Celebrate New York 2005, Big Apple Greeter's annual cocktail party and auction, honored Commissioner Katherine Oliver, The City of New York Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting. Held November 14, 2005, at a private club atop the MetLife Building, with the Empire State Building bathed in red, white and blue as a backdrop and the glittering city below, the stage was set for a dazzling event chaired by Tom Kane, President and CEO, Viacom Television Stations Group, and Peter Dunn, President and General Manager, WCBS-TV. Ms. Oliver said, "The film office has been acting like a Big Apple Greeter for 40 years. Most visitors know New York from our movies and TV." The Office's *Made in NY* program has brought over \$500 million and 6,000 new jobs to the city, as well as the chance for a visitor to happen upon a favorite star or film shoot.

Chair of Big Apple Greeter Board of Directors Christopher Boylan, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, welcomed guests and praised Greeters: "They take visitors by the hand with the style and flourish of a New Yorker that can't be matched anywhere."



Photo: Bernard Saper

Celebrate New York 2005 honoree Katherine Oliver, Commissioner of The City of New York Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting (center) with Big Apple Greeter Executive Director Lynn Brooks and Board Chair Christopher Boylan, Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

A bevy of television personalities added excitement to the evening. *Guiding Light* star Kim Zimmer presented Ms. Oliver with the award, saying, "My parents would have felt better if a Big Apple Greeter would have taken me by the

hand when I first arrived in New York." The Early Show weather anchor Dave Price, CBS 2 News Anchor Roz Abrams, and CBS 2 News Weatherman John Bolaris added excitement and laughs to the lively bidding for the Live and Silent Auctions where lucky bidders won travel packages here and abroad, theatre and dining packages, fine art and jewelry, and "Things Money Can't Buy" and "Uniquely New York."

Lynn Brooks, Founder and Executive Director of Big Apple Greeter thanked all who generously donated to the Silent and Live Auctions as well as members of the Benefit Committee, volunteer Board of Directors, staff and extraordinary volunteers who made the evening truly something to celebrate.



Photo: Bernard Saper

Board Member Diane McNulty of The New York Times greets guests at Big Apple Greeter's first Donor Thank You Reception. The event, hosted by The New York Times on October 18, 2005, was attended by supporters, friends and Board Members.

Honoree

Commissioner Katherine Oliver, The City of New York Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre, and Broadcasting

Special Celebrity Auctioneers

Dave Price - CBS2 News *This Morning* and *The Early Show*

Roz Abrams - CBS 2 News

John Bolaris - CBS 2 News

Special Celebrity Guest

Kim Zimmer - *Guiding Light*

Benefit Chairs

Tom Kane - President & CEO,

Viacom Television Stations Group

Peter Dunn, President and General Manager, WCBS-TV

Benefit Committee

Christopher P. Boylan, Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Wendy Eagan, Tiffany & Co.

Thomas G. Lewis, Gray Line New York Sightseeing

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BIG APPLE GREETER BOARD OF DIRECTORS (as of December 2005)

- * **Chair** - Paul Insalaco, President, BF9 Media
- * **Vice Chair** - Thomas G. Lewis – President, Gray Line New York Sightseeing
- * **Vice Chair** - Louise Morman – Senior Vice President Marketing & Economic Development, New York Power Authority
- * **Founder & Executive Director** - Lynn Brooks, Big Apple Greeter

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Hon. Helen M. Marshall, Queens Borough President
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* Executive Committee

Our Greeters say... We had an interesting discussion about building design and historical layout of neighborhoods...Despite the fact that we were 2 generations apart, we had a great deal in common. We shared ideas and feelings on various subjects and got along famously...

Annual Reception Goes Upscale Downtown

Big Apple Greeter took its annual Volunteer Recognition Event to new heights for its 13th anniversary reception. On September 14th, nearly 200 volunteers gathered on the top floor of Pier 17 at South Street Seaport to meet one another and swap stories. Hosted by South Street Seaport and catered by several Seaport restaurants, the event featured a harbor cruise sponsored by New York Water Taxi. By the end of the evening volunteers were touting their favorite routes for visitors and sharing recommendations for their favorite neighborhood eateries.

Big Apple Greeter Founder and Executive Director Lynn Brooks and Deputy Director and Director of Volunteers Alicia Pierro thanked everyone who was involved in the annual event, including South Street Seaport, New York Water Taxi, Big Apple Greeter's volunteer Board of Directors, and all the office volunteers and Greeters who make the program such a success. Over 62,000 visitors have been welcomed since Big Apple Greeter started in 1992.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation by Maria Casey, Chief Program Officer of the Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Metro New York, honoring Founder and Executive Director Lynn Brooks and the



Photo: Arthur Gold

Big Apple Greeter volunteers share good food and good times at the Recognition Event on September 14th at South Street Seaport Pier 17.

volunteers of Big Apple Greeter for “making New York City a place where children can discover hope, strength and joy.” Since 2002, a Greeter visit is included in a New York City itinerary when a child with a life-threatening illness and his/her family come to New York City for the fulfillment of a wish through the Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Metro New York.

Thank You...

Volunteer Recognition Event Sponsor

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Julia Nicholasi, Marketing Director

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And the volunteers who helped make this event a success

CWA 1180 Retirees Division
Arthur Gold
Michael Ng
Medelene Tran
Crystal Worrel
Big Apple Greeter Office Volunteers

Thank You...

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Donations Received in Memory of Ruth Schwarz Rindeman

Elizabeth Baltz, Joan and Joseph Briller, Doris Fruman, Bobbie and Arthur Gold, Linda and Allen Gralitzer, Lois M. Kahan, Alvin Katz, Helen J. Lento, Louise M. Morman, Minna Scharff, Louise S. Ufland, Allen Weber and Diana Weber, Joan & David Walters

Greeter Bits...

Bread is the staff of life: Greeter Ann Bially introduced Danish visitor Thomas Rye to the joys of the New York bagel... Jingle Bell Rock: Greeter Ton van den Broek wrote that when he and his Dutch visitors “ran into about 200 Salvation Army volunteer Santa Clauses, their Christmas in New York was complete.”... Greeter Noni Hollmann remembers how she first heard of Big Apple Greeter: “In 2000, I was sitting next to a couple from York on a flight from London to Kennedy. We talked about New York City and they told me about Big Apple Greeter. I helped them get from Kennedy to their hotel – my first unofficial ‘greeter’ activity – and then we met for dinner a few days later. They raved about their Greeter and the places they visited together. I thought to myself this sounded like fun.” Noni never forgot and became a Greeter in December 2005!

About Big Apple Greeter...



Founded in 1992, Big Apple Greeter's mission is to enhance New York City's worldwide image while enriching the City experience for its

visitors. Connecting with business and leisure travelers from all over the US and the world, Greeters take visitors on informal, unscripted walks through one or more neighborhoods in any of the five boroughs, promote tourism throughout the city, and help visitors discover the ease of using public transportation. More than 350 volunteer Greeters speak almost 30 languages and enjoy giving their time and energy back to their hometown. Since its founding, Big Apple Greeter – a free public service – has welcomed over 62,000 visitors and been featured in hundreds of newspapers, magazines, and television and radio programs all over the world, reaching an audience of over one billion potential visitors to New York City. Big Apple Greeter is proud to partner with NYC & Company and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

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A donation to Big Apple Greeter is the perfect gift for the New Yorker who has everything or as a way to celebrate a loved one's passion for New York City. Your donation is tax deductible, and the person(s) you are honoring will receive a personalized certificate with a theme of the borough of your choice. Make a secure online donation at www.bigapplegreeter.org

____ Enclosed is my check made payable to: Big Apple Greeter, Inc., One Centre St., New York, NY 10007

For more information, please contact Lynn Brooks at (212) 669-2362.

Or email: lbrooks@bigapplegreeter.org

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